

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 2, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We, members of the Montana Congressional delegation, write today to request your support for a state funeral for the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from World War II (WWII). This national recognition would also serve to recognize the 473 service members who were awarded the Medal of Honor for service during WWII, along with the 16 million American men and women who faithfully served our nation, including many Montanans, during that war. The Medal of Honor represents the indomitable spirit, determination, selflessness and gallantry of those who, in the face of overwhelming odds, performed far beyond the call of duty. This state funeral would honor not only those who served in combat, but would recognize the spirit and determination of our “Greatest Generation.”


The “Greatest Generation” represents the character and strength of Montana and the United States of America. Montana’s very own Captain William W. Galt, U.S. Army, was awarded the Medal of Honor during WWII for gallantry, risking his life, while serving with the 168th Infantry Regiment, 34th Infantry Division. Unfortunately, Captain Galt, along with Montana’s other Medal of Honor recipients, have long since passed away – leaving just memories of their acts of heroism and opportunities to honor their service. We are determined to honor all these patriots from that generation, who stepped up and showed great courage and valor during the war.

State funerals for certain individuals have historically been used as a way to honor the sacrifice of many during a conflict. Some previous state funerals include one held for the Unknown Soldier of World War I in 1921, one honoring John Pershing, the WWI expeditionary commander in 1948, and another honoring General Douglas MacArthur in 1964. As you know, there was also supposed to be a state funeral for the WWII Unknown Soldiers in 1950, but it was delayed by the Korean conflict. It wasn’t until 1958 that a joint state funeral was held for the WWII and Korean conflict Unknown Soldiers. We believe it is just and worthy for the country to honor the last Medal of Honor recipient from WWII by holding a state funeral, allowing our citizens to reflect on the courage and sacrifice of the entire WWII generation.


These ceremonies offer our nation the opportunity to pause and reflect on the service of not only the individual, but also those who served alongside them. Mr. President, you hold the authority to designate a state funeral and we request that you honor the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from World War II with this distinction.

It is time to pay a final salute to the millions of men and women of the “Greatest Generation” who served our country from 1941 to 1945. Holding this state funeral to honor those who served in World War II, and in particular the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient, gives our nation an opportunity to publically thank those who saved the world from Nazis, fascism and imperialism.


Sincerely,



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator



Matthew Rosendale Sr.
United States Congressman